





# **NARAJOLE RAJ COLLEGE**

**(NAAC Accredited B Grade Govt. – Aided College)**

*NARAJOLE: PASCHIM MEDINIPUR: PIN-721211*

**Department of English**

Semester – VI

Paper – DSE-3

Name of Teacher – Tanmay Kumar Goswami

revealed his characters major and minor all through their appearance, manners, style of speaking, activities etc. Sometimes directly narrator tells about the characteristics of the other characters. The speeches of the characters are also the main ingredient of drawing their character. Readers automatically start to draw in their mind the character. Sometime it leads them to feel pity and anger for the characters. In this novel as for example we feel pity for Laura and hatred for Sir Percival Glyde. In Wilkie Collins' novels it is an important thing that mostly he revealed the theme by the characters. The instinct of the characters and their activities contribute the plot and its development.

## **WALTER HARTRIGHT**

Walter Hartright is the main character of this sensational novel **The Woman in White**. He played the most important role from the beginning to the end. He is poor, frustrated, ambitious and sympathetic and intelligent also. The novelist revealed all the important themes through the drawing of his character. At the end of the novel he brought resolution to all the complications which is the kernel of the plot. At the very beginning we see he had helped his friend, Pesca, the Italian language teacher once when he was in danger and could hardly survive. It reveals his helping character to the others. He is a good and sincere lover. He did a lot of things for his lady love Laura. He is detective and intelligent in the one sense also.

Walter Hartright is a sincere lover of Laura Fairlie. He came to the Fairlie family being appointed as a drawing teacher to Laura and her half sister Marian. Immediately he became impressed with Laura's beauty and strong personality. They both fell in love. Then he came to know that Laura is already betrothed to Sir Percival Glyde. This marriage had been proposed by her father Mr. Fairlie. Seeing no hope with Laura he went Central America for the future. But when he saw Laura and Marian in wretched condition escaping from the asylum and met by chance Walter. He came forward to help them every possible way. It proved his sincerity in love. though at that time Laura Fairlie was



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the wife of Sir Percival, the criminal. But his true love was as alive as it was before.

He was an ambitious man always in the novel. Getting news from his friend Pesca he decided to go to Limmeridge House for the job of a drawing teacher for good income. He did not like the owner Mr. Frederick Fairlie but he did not leave the job. In the meantime he fell in love with Laura Fairlie with whom he saw a good future as this girl was to get all the properties of the Fairlie family. He tried to marry Laura who is already engaged to Percival. It shows his ambitious nature. With this he went Central America being failed in love for a good income and future.

His sympathetic character was revealed again and again in the novel. At first Pesca narrated that in some dangerous situation Walter help him to survive when he was in problem. That is why he gave the news of vacancy of a drawing teacher in the Fairlie family in his financial trouble some situation. Again it was found when he helped the woman in white who lost the way to London and asked for help to him. He immediately called in a cab and helped her without knowing that this woman has escaped from Asylum. He did a lot of things to help Laura and Marian to restore Laura's lost identity. He was victim of Sir Percival Glyde. For this sympathetic and helping nature he deserved a high and esteemed position in the heart of the readers.

Walter was also very intelligent and had a zeal of a detective. He met a woman in white on the way to the London. He came to know from the policeman that she has escaped from asylum. He did not leave the matter here. Next he shared the event with Marian and investigated to find out the identity of the woman. At last he did it. Again he came to know that Laura had lost her identity. He decided to restore it anyway. So he took help from his friend Pesca and find out all the secrets and intrigue of Sir Percival. He caught Count Fosco and made him bound to confess the crime how they destroyed her identity and life of Anne Catherick. At last he was able to solve all the complications of the plot with his wise approach.

In this way Walter revealed his character through his activities. It was Wilkie



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Collins' indirect characterization which established Walter at a highest position in reader's heart. He influenced the main plot from beginning to the end in such a way that he is considered as the hero of the novel.

## **SIR PERCIVAL GLYDE**

Sir Percival Glyde is a hard core criminal character in the novel which is a criminal fiction for this. All the characteristics of a so-called villain he deserved. He admitted all the activities like identity suppression, betrayal, murder, false documentation and limitless aggression for money through the entire novel.

At the very beginning we come to know from Marian that Sir Percival Glyde is betrothed to Laura Fairlie. This marriage was proposed by her father Mr. Fairlie. Though an illegitimate child and poor, this man could manage to win the belief of Mr. Fairlie and his daughter's hand. Laura was not agree to accept him rather she was in love with Walter. She was uninterested and was delaying the marriage but Glyde could be able to win confidence of the other family members who created pressure on Laura to marry immediately. Ultimately Sir Percival Glyde achieved his success.

He did betray and murder Laura Fairlie. By giving false identity he could manage to marry Laura only to snatch her property. He was badly in need of money. So he made a will of the family by the help of a lawyer. According to this will after the death of Laura he will get her entire property. Then he planned to murder her and won confidence to go London with him and his friend. There he executed the plan and murdered Anne Catherick and send Laura to asylum in the name of Anne. He destroyed the Identity of Laura in this way whereas Laura was her wife. This aroused anger among the readers. It established him as a hard core notorious criminal.

On the other hand his expertise in intriguing is revealed in the possession of Laura's property and also the Blackwater Park house at Hampshire. Only for or the



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possession of Fairlie properties he did intrigue to marry Laura. Then he planned to make a will by which after Laura he will have the right of getting it legally. His expertise was proved in murdering Laura in London. For this purpose he involved Count Fosco and his wife Eleanor. All of them told Laura that Marian is ill and she is in London. They took her in London and executed the plan. Though he was an illegitimate son of his father he planned well to get his father's property well. At last he was able to possess it legally. Actually he was intelligent enough to structure intrigue to achieve his criminal purpose. Here one thing is evidently clear that he was always expert to do any plan.

Being an illegitimate son he did not have right in his father's property. But he was expert in making the false documents. So at first with the help of Mrs. Catherine he made a false document of his mother's marriage which made legal by registering in the Church. Then he produced another of his birth certificate which was also recorded in the Church. In this way he became able to prove himself as a legal heir of his father's property. He possessed Blackwater Park house in this plan. Also he dared to destroy his false document at the end when he was in trouble and the truth was disclosed to all. But unfortunately he died in the fire accident in the Church.

Sir Percival Glyde evidently proved his limitless aggression for money and property always again and again entire the novel. At the very beginning he created pressure on Laura to marry him by inspiring the situation with the other family members. He was so greedy to get property he did not hesitate to kill even his wife. He plotted a dangerous inhuman plan to murder Anne Catherick. He proved himself a legal heir of his father's property whereas he was an illegitimate child actually. He committed murders numberless crimes only for money which is the evidence of his limitless aggression. Ultimately Sir Percival Glyde is drawn as a perfect criminal character for which this novel is a criminal fiction in short. All brutal and bloodshed events which are plotted are the parts of his intrigue. Characters of Sir Percival Glyde is designed through indirect characterization of Wilkie Collins.



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## **LAURA FAIRLIE**

Laura Fairlie is another important major character of the novel. She may be considered as the heroine of this sensational novel. After her appearance at the very beginning she never was absent in any action and situation. Her character is sketched both in direct and in indirect characterization art of Wilkie Collins. Few traits are narrated directly by some other characters of the novel. She is beautiful and had strong personality as per Walter. She is respectful to keep promise or word of her father and faithful wife of Sir Percival Glyde. She had zeal of art and romance. She is sincere and dutiful to her sister Marian. Her character is drawn here flawless for which pity and a sensation aroused among the readers for her.

Characterization may be done directly or indirectly. In the first part of the novel we see Walter came to the Limmeridge house at Cumberland to the Fairlie family. He was received by Marian who was pretty hot and young with dark hair when he met Laura he fell in love immediately to see her beauty. She had a strong personality. These are narrated by Walter. That is why it is direct art of characterization.

Laura had the value of word very much. It is narrated in the novel that Walter fell in love at first sight of Laura. Laura was also fell in love similarly. They loved each other sincerely. Marian informed us that on her father's death bed Laura had promised to marry this Sir Percival Glyde. So she denied Walter to marry though Walter insisted on it. It reveals her determined attitude to promise. It is because we know very well she did not like the man at all. Moreover Marian and Laura both had doubt about the actual identity of Sir Percival Glyde. In spite of all these she married the man only to keep her promise which she did to her father at his deathbed.

She is timid and nervous in the Blackwater park house. After marriage Laura and Sir Percival Glyde went to London to spend their honeymoon. They came back to the





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Blackwater Park house at Hampshire with Count Fosco and Eleanor. In this house she felt nervous as she could feel well that there was something secret among these three. Being afraid of something uncanny she called in her half sister Marian to stay with her there. It proved her timid and nervous heart. On the other hand Marian had courage enough to stay there and to investigate the truth. Laura was so weak that she could do nothing to save herself from the intrigue of Sir Percival Glyde. She had to be the victim of this conspiracy and lost her identity.

Laura was always a good and sincere wife. At first she married Sir Percival Glyde for whom she was dutiful. She had enough faith on her husband. That is why Sir Percival Glyde could make her agree to go to London to meet her half sister Marian. She did not think whether her sister was in the house or in London. She went there and became the victim. Later on she married Walter with whom she was happy enough. In the meantime she was suffering from the Identity crisis. This identity crisis was the result of the industrial revolution in Great Britain which has been reflected in the novel through the character of Laura.

Again Laura is the slightly tragic character in this novel. Sir Percival Glyde did intrigue against her. It is resulted in the murder of Anne Catherick and the destruction of Laura's Identity. Then she was send to asylum as a mental patient. She tried hard to make them understand about her actual identity but in brain. This miserable and wretched condition was capable of arousing pity for her. Readers are afraid to think what was waiting for her next that is why she may be considered as a tragic character in the novel.